

MARRIED ON A BET

The Startling Adventures of a Queer Honeymoon Costing \$1,000 an Hour



"I'll bet you a thousand dollars that you can't get married, buy a house, furnish it and go to housekeeping in a day--or better yet, I'll pay the expense of the whole business to any man why can. Now!"

Tom Hampton, bachelor, champion of the state of single-blessedness and millionaire sugar man, delivered his challenge, sank back into the soft depths of a big soft leather davenport in the lobby of the club, folded his arms, gazed up at a cluster of lights and pulled vigorously at his cigar, satisfied he had delivered a fatal blow to the argument of his three opponents, that getting married and establishing a home was child's play--if a man had the girl and the money

"It can't be done," he insisted, with an air of finality.

Benton, Harper and Henderson laughed. "You never tried it, Tom," said Harper, patting the massive shoulder of the defiant Hampton. "Wait till you find the right girl; you'll get a home in less than a day."

"Like thun-----."

Hampton's ejaculation was swallowed up in a shout from Harper, who sat facing the door. "Bob," he called, to a trim, up-standing, well dressed young man who turned at the sound of his name--and summoned him with a jerk of his head.

"I'll just take your bet," Harper said, in a low expectant tone. His companions turned quickly as the newcomer approached smiling. Harper rose. "Bob," he said, "this is my friend, Mr. Hampton--and Mr. Benton--and Mr. Henderson, gentlemen--my nephew, Mr. Carson.

The quartette resumed their seats. Carson looked quickly about at the clock, then toward the dining room.

"Had your dinner?" asked Harper.

"Just finished," replied Carson.

"Pull up a chair," said Harper. "Want to talk to you."

"Can't, thanks," said the young chap. "Got to go."

"Just a minute," insisted Harper, jumping out of his chair and pulling up a rocker. "Got something big to tell you."

Benton, Harper and Henderson puffed at their cigars and squinted a friendly eye at Carson, through the billows of smoke. He sat down and leaned forward as a sign of subdued impatience.

"Mr. Hampton here," Harper began with a chuckle, "unlike yourself, is a cynic about women and matrimony. He is willing to bet the cost, that a man can't get married, buy house furnishings and go to house-keeping in a day."

Carson, for the first time since the meeting, showed a degree of interest.

"Now I know you want to get married, Bob, don't you?"

"Well--," began Bob, blushing.

"Now what I want you to do," continued his uncle, "is to marry your fiancée, Miss Burroughs, tomorrow and prove that what we three claim is possible, by giving a dinner in honor of Hampton at your house tomorrow night. Are you on?"

"I'll take you," laughed Carson, a flood of joy dazing, blinding and thrilling him. His heart leaped and began pounding a tattoo. The dream of the past two years of his life, prevented from becoming a reality by lack of adequate finances, was to come true. His own chuckle brought him with a start out of his delirium of happiness.

He saw his uncle turn to Hampton. "Agreed, we'll take you, Tom," he heard him say, in a voice that seemed far away. "Now remember, it's house and lot and complete furnishings, if he marries and gives us a dinner in own house tomorrow night.

"That's it," said Hampton. He can start in any time after 5 a. m. tomorrow.

"Excuse me till I call up the young lady, as she has something to say, you know," said Carson, rising and almost staggering with the intoxication of joy, to a nearby phone booth.

When he stepped out, he was smiling. "It's all right," he said, glowing. At 7 o'clock tomorrow night a taxi will call for you at the club, to take you all to the new home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Carson for dinner. Please be prompt," he said, as he started to leave, "now I'll have to hurry," he called back.

"I'm not a bit afraid I'll lose," said Hampton, chuckling until his massive frame trembled with mirth, "but I'll stand by the agreement."

"I can't lose, that's all," laughed Carson, as he swung through the door, into the street.

Once out of the club, Carson, spirits soaring, heart fluttering, hurried to the Burroughs home. Grace met him at the door. "Is it really true?" she asked eagerly.

"True as gospel," said Carson--and throwing his hat on a chair, took her in his arms and kissed her and then pulled her after him into the sitting room.

Mr. and Mrs. Burroughs rose to meet him.

"What in the world is this wager that you young scamps have made?" asked the girl's father, dropping his paper and looking over his glasses.

"It's a chance of a lifetime," blurted out Carson, putting his arm around Grace's shoulders and drawing her to him. "We can get a house and lot and all the furnishings free if we win. Tom Hampton's bet us."

"But if you lose?" interrupted Mr. Burroughs.

"We can't, that's all. We're going to win." He took Grace by the arm and started her for her father's den, adjoining. "Come on Grace, we've got to plan this thing out."

"You crazy children," said the portly Mrs. Burroughs, as she sat down and picked up her sewing basket. The thought of her daughter's departure from her home on the morrow was not as happy to her as to Carson. She listened till the voices that came through the door softened into animated whispers, then she resumed her work.

